



Personal Branding Toolkit



INTRODUCTION



Your personal brand is the belief or opinion that other people have about you. As you enter the marketplace with your newly acquired skills and compete with other qualified candidates for employment, you'll want to build and cultivate a unique personal brand that helps you stand out from the crowd. If your brand doesn't shine, you may miss out on a career or promotional opportunity.

You probably associate brands with advertising and have seen how they are used by companies to get their products and services noticed. But when it comes to your personal brand, it's more than just getting noticed. You want to manage how people see you and the qualities you bring to a job. The first step in building brand is to identify those qualities. These would include your values, strengths, and unique skills. After you've identified those qualities, you'll want to incorporate them consistently across all your career branding channels. This toolkit will guide you through an assessment of your strengths and values and help you identify those qualities that make your brand unique and appealing to employers. Then we will provide you with guidance and checklists for using your brand consistently in your elevator speech, cover letter and resume and social media platforms.

After completing this toolkit you will be able to:

- Identify the strengths and those unique abilities that make you stand out.
- Identify the values that guide the decisions you make both on and off the job.
- Craft an elevator speech that captures your strengths and values, conveys what you can do, and describes why you would be the perfect candidate for a job.
- Write a cover letter that calls attention to your brand.
- Prepare a resume that matches your unique skills, strengths and values to the needs of employers.
- Create a LinkedIn profile that reflects your personal brand.

Please note that this toolkit is not an all-inclusive guide for preparing an elevator speech, writing a cover letter and resume, or crafting a LinkedIn profile. Rather, it is designed to help you enhance these career branding channels and ensure that your values and strengths are consistently applied to them.



IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS



You can't develop a strong brand without first identifying your strengths and those unique skills and abilities that make you stand out. Knowing your strengths allows you to create effective career marketing tools and develop an engaging, professional online presence.

To identify your strengths, please consider the following skills, all of which are valued by employers, and answer the questions provided below.

Communication Skills – This includes the ability to listen, write and speak in an effective manner.

Interpersonal Skills - This includes the ability to relate well to others and manage conflict effectively.

Organizational and Planning Skills – This includes the ability to manage time and resources effectively, meet deadlines, and achieve goals and objectives.

Decision-making – This includes the ability to gather the necessary information, weigh options, and make a sound decision.

Problem solving – This includes the ability to analyze, find causes, and identify the best solution to a problem.

Gathering and managing information - This includes the ability to gather information from different sources, integrating information in a logical way, and identifying trends and patterns.

Leadership – This includes that ability to motivate and mentor others, identify strengths and weaknesses, and manage people to achieve goals in an efficient manner.

Technical skills – This includes the ability to use a variety of hardware and software tools.

Please answer the following questions to determine your strengths:

- What was your most successful work related accomplishment and what contributed to your success?
- Of the skills listed below, which do you enjoy using the most and consider to be your strengths?

- If your friends were to describe your best work attribute, what might they say?

Based on the responses you provided above, what do you believe are your five greatest strengths?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES



Values are the unique beliefs you hold that guide the decisions you make both on and off the job. We've provided a comprehensive list of values below. Please complete the following steps to identify the values that are most important to you.

1. Review the list and cross out those values that do *not* fit you as a person or your ideal job.
2. Review the list again and circle those qualities that are important to you and would be a good fit with your ideal job.
3. Review the list of circled values and choose **five** that are most important to you. Enter those five values on the page 5.

Accessibility	Commitment	Discipline	Focus
Accountability	Compassion	Diversity	Freedom
Accuracy	Competitiveness	Economy	Fun
Achievement	Consistency	Effectiveness	Generosity
Adventure	Contentment	Efficiency	Growth
Affluence	Continuous Improvement	Empathy	Humor
Altruism	Control	Enjoyment	Hard Work
Ambition	Cooperation	Enthusiasm	Health
Assertiveness	Courtesy	Equality	Honesty
Balance	Creativity	Excellence	Independence
Being the best	Curiosity	Expertise	Ingenuity
Belonging	Decisiveness	Fairness	Inquisitiveness
Boldness	Dependability	Faith	Insightfulness
Calmness	Determination	Family	Integrity
Carefulness	Diligence	Fidelity	Intelligence
Cheerfulness		Fitness	Justice

Knowledge	Perfection	Results-oriented	Success
Leadership	Practicality	Security	Teamwork
Love	Preparedness	Selflessness	Thoroughness
Loyalty	Professionalism	Self-reliance	Trustworthiness
Mastery	Punctuality	Sensitivity	Understanding
Openness	Prudence	Speed	Vision
Optimism	Quality-orientation	Spontaneity	Vitality
Order	Reliability	Stability	
Originality	Resourcefulness	Strategic	
Passion		<i>Strength</i>	

Please enter the five values you have chosen below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



BUILD YOUR BRAND



Now that you have identified your strengths and values, it's time build your brand by incorporating them into your elevator speech, cover letter, resume, and social media profile. You want to be sure to convey a consistent branding message across each of these tools.

Your Elevator Speech



An elevator speech is a clear, concise and persuasive introduction that you can deliver in the span of an elevator ride. It captures your strengths and values, conveys what you can do, and describes why you would be the perfect candidate for a job. You should be prepared to deliver your elevator speech at networking events, job interviews, or any other time when the right opportunity calls for it.

For the purpose of providing examples in this toolkit, we will use a fictitious charter who recently obtained a BSN and is seeking a job as a nurse. Jane Doe identified her five strengths as having relevant experience, being a quick and excellent learner, having the demonstrated ability to work with children, possessing an appropriate and recently acquired credential, and being a team player. She described her five most important values as being the best, commitment, compassion, hard work, and discipline. Here's how she might describe her strengths and values in an elevator speech:

Hi, I'm Jane Doe. I recently obtained my Bachelors of Nursing degree at Columbia College where I excelled in my studies with a 3.5 grade point average. Before I acquired my BSN, I worked at Metropolitan Hospital where I served as a nurse's aide on the pediatric ward for five years. I enjoyed that work tremendously and always received excellent performance reviews, earning the hospital's employee of the year award in 2012. Now that I've acquired a credential that allows me to assume a more responsible position, I'm and eager and ready for a new challenge. May we discuss the nursing opportunities available in your hospital?

Use this checklist to craft your elevator speech using the strengths and values that you have identified:

CHECKLIST FOR ELEVATOR SPEECH	
	Have you identified who you are?
	Have you described your experience and/or training as it relates to the position you are seeking?
	Have you described your strengths, the unique qualities you would bring to the job and what sets you apart from the others? .
	Have you provided proof rather than simply saying you are a hard worker? Is that proof memorable?
	Have you described what you are passionate about and how your values would benefit the employer?
	Have you asked for the opportunity to explore and discuss available positions?
	Have you practiced your pitch with a friend or mentor to ensure that you are delivering your presentation in a sincere, compelling and effective way?

Your Cover Letter

The first step in writing an effective cover letter is to determine the specific needs of the company you are targeting. Once you have identified the company's needs, you can match your skills, strengths and values to what they are looking for. If for example, a hospital was seeking a nurse for a pediatric unit who had the ability to work collaboratively with physicians and other health team members in coordinating and implementing care, here's how Jane might begin her cover letter:

I am pleased to submit my resume in response to your recent announcement seeking a nurse for Metropolitan Hospital's pediatric unit. As a recent honors graduate of Columbia College's BSN program who has 5 years of professional healthcare experience in pediatric units, I have the qualifications, skills and passion needed to work with children and their families along with temperament and maturity required to serve as a valued member of a treatment team. Here are several of my professional and academic accomplishments as they relate to the requirements of the available position:

After you have captured their attention in the initial paragraph by demonstrating that you meet the company's specific needs, you would continue by explaining in detail why you are the best candidate for the job. One way of doing this is to bullet point the position's major requirements and then briefly describe how you are uniquely qualified to meet each of those requirements. For example, here's how Jane might do this:

- **Bachelor's Degree in Nursing** – I recently obtained my BSN at Columbia College with a 3.5 grade point average while working part-time as a nurse's aide in Metropolitan Hospital's pediatric unit.
- **Ability to work collaboratively with physicians and other health team members** – In my capacity as a nurse's aide, I worked collaboratively with physicians and other health team members in coordinating and implementing procedures and treatments and was recognized as the employee of the year in 2009.

After you have described how your strengths and values are matched to the company's needs and requirements, you want to summarize your capabilities and guarantee that you can get the job done. For example:

I am certain that my academic credentials and accomplishments, professional experience, and passion for working with children and their families would be of value to Metropolitan's Hospital.

If you have limited or no experience in the field you will be entering, focus on your academic accomplishments and skills from previous work experience that are transferrable to the available position. If, for example, you worked closely with others in a previous position, you might write, "In my role as a counselor for a nonprofit organization, I was part of a six-person interdisciplinary team that successfully met or exceeded its goals for three consecutive years."

Use this checklist to ensure that your cover letter adequately reflects and embodies your personal brand.

CHECKLIST FOR BRANDING YOUR COVER LETTER	
	Does the first paragraph have a strong opening that communicates how your strengths and values are well matched to the job?
	Does the body of the cover letter clearly demonstrate how your strengths and values make you uniquely qualified to meet each requirement of the job?
	Have you emphasized your accomplishments and achievements rather than list your previous duties and responsibilities?
	Does the concluding paragraph summarize your capabilities and "guarantee" that you can do the job?

Your Resume

Your resume should complement your elevator speech and cover letter and concisely capture your strengths, values and passion for the work you are seeking. Most human resource managers and executives will spend less than 30 seconds reviewing a resume and they'll focus on its top half. If you have an objective statement, delete it. Employers are not interested in knowing that you seeking a challenging position in their company. Rather, they are interested in knowing what you can do for them. You can communicate this through a branding statement.

A branding statement defines who you are – your strengths, your values and your promise of what you can do. It should capture your reputation and tell the employer what sets you apart from the competition. Avoid overused phrases such as “results oriented” and use action verbs that convey your vitality such as “streamlined” or “initiated.” Here's an example:

Highly dedicated and passionate health care professional with 5 years of experience as a pediatric nurse's aide who successfully acquired Bachelor's Degree in Nursing in 2015 with a grade point average of 3.45.

The professional experience section of your resume should reinforce you the branding message you want to convey. Don't simply list job duties and responsibilities. Succinctly describe your accomplishments and what value you provided to previous employers.

CHECKLIST FOR BRANDING YOUR RESUME	
	Have you included a branding statement at the beginning of the resume?
	Does your branding statement avoid clichés and overused words?
	Does your branding statement highlight your strengths and values in a distinctive way?
	Does your professional experience section reinforce your branding message?
	Have you described your accomplishments?

Your LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is an important branding platform that is used widely by human resource recruiters. It is often the first impression a prospective employer might have of you, so it's vitally important that your profile reflects your accomplishments and your unique qualities and values. You also want to make sure that the profile is flawless and does not contain any spelling or grammatical errors. Here are several tips ensuring that your LinkedIn profile reflects your personal brand:

Create an Effective Headline - LinkedIn allows you to have a headline below your name that is limited to 120 characters. Because it's the first thing that visitors to your profile will see, use it to showcase your strengths and values. Make it clear and distinctive using terms that recruiters search for. Here's an example that Jane might use:

Caring Registered Nurse who excels at helping pediatric patients and their families through treatment and recovery.

Use a High Quality Headshot - Because LinkedIn profiles with photos are more likely to be viewed than those that don't, you'll want to include one. Make sure that it is a high quality headshot. When taking the photo, look at the camera lens and smile!

Showcase your Work - If you can showcase your work using SlideShare, upload your media to the site and add it to your LinkedIn profile. If you've published an article relevant to your profession, be sure to include that in the publications section.

Have a Trusted Colleague or Friend Review your Profile – LinkedIn is your online resume and needs to be as flawless as the one you have on paper. Be sure to have a friend or colleague review it for errors and the quality of its content.

CHECKLIST FOR BRANDING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE	
	Have you included a headline that used the right keywords and reflects your strengths and values?
	Have you included a high quality headshot?
	Have you showcased your work or publications?
	Have you had a trusted colleague or friend critique your profile?



RESOURCES



Resume Guide



<http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/Introduction.aspx>

Careeronestop.org provides a comprehensive resume guide which includes:

- A step-by-step plan for what to include in a resume
- Tips for writing, formatting, and polishing
- Sample resumes from a variety of job seekers
- Ways to market your resume and get it into the right hands
- How to make the most of the Internet and tools like LinkedIn and Facebook
- Answers to the most frequently asked resume questions

The Complete Guide to Building your Brand



<https://www.quicksprout.com/the-complete-guide-to-building-your-personal-brand/>

This comprehensive eight-chapter website guide includes topics such as:

- How to Build Up Your Online and Offline Assets
- How to Build your Brand through Outreach
- How to Monitor your Brand